

**We claim:**

- 5/11/01
1. A joint prosthesis system for joining a first bone having a first surface to a second bone having a second surface, comprising:
    - at least one bioabsorbable spacer adapted to be interposed between the first surface and the second surface; and
    - at least one connector adapted to be fixedly attached to the first bone and the second bone, at least a portion of the connector being in contact with the spacer and disposed to prevent lateral movement of the spacer.
  2. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer is cylindrical.
  3. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer has a porosity of about 50  $\mu\text{m}$  to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$ .
  4. The joint prosthesis as set forth in claim 3, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric wrapped to form a cylindrical body.
  5. The joint prosthesis as set forth in claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer further comprises a bioabsorbable film that binds with said bioabsorbable fabric.
  6. The joint prosthesis as set forth in claim 5, wherein said bioabsorbable film comprises bioactive components.
  7. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is comprised of at least two compounds having different degradation rates in tissue.
  8. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is coated with a material having a different degradation rate in tissue than the bioabsorbable fabric.

9. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric comprises fibers, said fibers comprising a first polymer coated with a second polymer that degrades faster in tissue than said first polymer.
10. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric comprising bioabsorbable fibers having a thickness of about 1 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ .
11. The joint prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a bioactive agent.
12. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a cavity.
13. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 12, wherein the surface of said cavity comprises at least one bioactive agent.
14. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said at least one bioactive agent is a bone growth promoting substance.
15. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said at least one bioactive agent is hyaline cartilage cells.
16. The joint prosthesis system as set forth as set forth in claim 1 comprising two bioabsorbable spacers.
17. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 16, wherein at least one of said bioabsorbable spacers comprises a cavity.
18. The joint prosthesis system as set forth as set forth in claim 17, wherein the surface of said cavity comprises a bioactive agent.

19. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 17, wherein the surface of said cavity further comprises hyaline cartilage cells.
20. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1 comprising two bioabsorbable spacers, wherein each of said bioabsorbable spacers comprise a first side adapted to contact either a first bone having a first surface or a second bone having a second surface and each of said absorbable spacers comprise a second side adapted to contact the other bioabsorbable spacer.
21. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 20, wherein said first side comprises a bioactive agent to promote bone growth, and said second side comprises a bioactive agent to promote cartilage growth.
22. The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said connector is constructed of the patient's own tissue.
23. A method for treating a joint injury comprising the steps of:
  - providing at least one bioabsorbable spacer;
  - interposing said at least one bioabsorbable spacer between the surface of a first bone having a first surface and a second bone having a second surface;
  - connecting said first bone to said second bone with at least one connector such that at least part of said connector contacts said at least one bioabsorbable spacer, thereby restricting the lateral movement of said bioabsorbable spacer.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer is cylindrical.
25. The method of claim 23, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer has a porosity of about 50  $\mu\text{m}$  to 1000  $\mu\text{m}$ .
26. The method of claim 23, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric wrapped to form a cylindrical body.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer further comprises a bioabsorbable film that binds with said bioabsorbable fabric.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein said bioabsorbable film includes bioactive components.
29. The method of claim 26, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is comprised of at least two compounds having different degradation rates in tissue.
30. The method of claim 26, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is coated with a material having a different degradation rate in tissue than the bioabsorbable fabric.
31. The method of claim 29, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric comprises fibers, said fibers comprising a first polymer coated with a second polymer that degrades faster in tissue than said first polymer.
32. The method of claim 23, wherein said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric comprising bioabsorbable fibers having a thickness of about 1 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$ .
33. The method of claim 23, where said bioabsorbable spacer comprises a cavity.
34. The method of claim 23, wherein two bioabsorbable spacers are interposed between the first and second bones such that the first bioabsorbable spacer is interposed between the first bone and the second bioabsorbable spacer and the second bioabsorbable spacer is interposed between the first bioabsorbable spacer and the second bone.
35. The method of claim 33, wherein at least one of said bioabsorbable spacers comprises a cavity.